CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1164
7 August 1992

Original: ENGLISH

STATEMENT MADE ON BEHALF OF THE "AUSTRALIA GROUP"
BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA, AMBASSADOR PAUL O'SULLIVAN,
AT THE 629TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

I wish to refer in particular to the activities of the Australia Group. These are informal consultations on harmonising export control policies which were initiated in the absence of any global agreement on this subject. This issue has come up in the discussion about Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In order to help address some of the concerns that have been raised in that discussion I am authorised to make the following statement:

"The following States: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, members of the 'Australia Group', welcome the forthcoming signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

"This Convention, the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character to include an international verification regime, offers a unique opportunity to eliminate a whole class of inhumane and abhorrent weapons.

"The strengthening of world security which will derive from the effective implementation of this Convention should be accompanied by increased co-operation among States. This is the objective of Article XI of the Convention, which the abovementioned States undertake fully to comply with.

"This Article aims at facilitating the fullest possible exchanges in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention so as to promote the harmonious economic or technological development of all States Parties.

"The abovementioned States are particularly aware of the need to preserve the proper balance between, on the one hand, the imperatives of the economic and technological development of States, especially in the chemical field, and, on the other hand, the security constraints placed upon them.

"The use which can be made of certain chemical products and equipment for purposes prohibited under the Convention should cause States which are future parties to the Convention to exercise the greatest vigilance so that the desire to ensure the greatest chance of development to all does not as a consequence facilitate, for certain proliferators, prohibited activities which constitute a potential threat to global security.

"The abovementioned States consider that the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, of which they undertake to be original signatories, will be a most valuable instrument to reach this goal.

"They undertake to review, in the light of the implementation of the Convention, the measures that they take to prevent the spread of chemical substances and equipment for purposes contrary to the objectives of the Convention, with the aim of removing such measures for the benefit of States Parties to the Convention acting in full compliance with their obligations under the Convention.

"They intend thus to contribute actively to an increase in commercial and technological exchanges between States and to the universal and full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons."